

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DUBAN 00354 141826Z
ACTION AF-10

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R 141317Z JUN 78
FM AMCONSUL DURBAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2951
USICA WASHDC
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN 2215
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: SCUL, SOPN, SF
SUBJ: POLICE TO PROSECUTE UNIVERSITY OF NATAL FOR SHOWING
"ROOTS"

REF: A. DURBAN 256 B. CAPE TOWN 1159

1. PROFESSOR CLARENCE, PRINCIPAL OF UNIVERSITY OF NATAL,
TOLD US JUNE 13 HE HAD JUST BEEN VISITED BY A POLICE OFFICIAL
WHO CONFIRMED THE SAG INTENDED TO PROSECUTE THE UNIVERSITY
FOR SCREENING "ROOTS" IN MAY (REF A). HE WAS TOLD IT WAS THE
UNIVERSITY'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE FILMS SHOWN ON CAMPUS
HAVE BEEN CLEARED BY THE PUBLICATIONS CONTROL BOARD. THE
POLICE SAID THIS FILM HAD NOT BEEN CLEARED AND WAS DEEMED IN-
APPROPRIATE BY THE BOARD. THE OFFICIAL INDICATED THE
UNIVERSITY COULD EITHER PAY A R100 ADMISSION GUILT FINE OR THE
PROJECTIONIST AND CAMPUS ORGANIZER WOULD HAVE TO APPEAR IN
COURT TO CONTEST CASE. CLARENCE SAID HE HAD EARLIER TOLD
POLICE HE PERSONALLY WOULD ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCREENING,
IN HOPES OF DETERRING POLICE FROM PROSECUTING. HOWEVER POLICE
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SAY HE CANNOT BE CHARGED AS LAW REFERS ONLY TO THOSE PROVIDING
AND PROJECTING FILM. OFFICIAL REPORTEDLY SHRUGGED WHEN CLARENCE
ASKED IF THEY INTENDED CHARGING USG FOR HAVING PROVIDED FILM.

2. THE RECTOR SAID HE CALLED TO INFORM US OF SITUATION, TO
LEARN OUR POLICY ON CLEARING FILMS WITH PUBLICATIONS BOARD
BEFORE SHOWING, AND TO INQUIRE IF WE HAVE HAD ANY CONVERSATION

WITH THE SAG ON THE FILM, PRIOR OR SUBSEQUENT TO SCREENING.
WE TOLD HIM WE DID NOT AS A POLICY CLEAR FILMS WITH THE
PUBLICATIONS CONTROL BOARD AND HAD NOT CLEARED "ROOTS" BUT
ADDED THE QUESTION OF CLEARING FILMS HAD NEVER ARISEN BEFORE.
WE ALSO SAID WE HAD DISCUSSED MATTER WITH SAG, AT THEIR
REQUEST, AFTER THE SCREENING.

3. PROFESSOR CLARENCE SEEMED DISTURBED AND DEFENSIVE ON THE
ISSUE. HE ADMITTED IT HAD NEVER BEFORE OCCURED TO HIM TO
CHECK IF FILMS THE UNIVERSITY SCREENED FROM US AND UK
CONSULATES HAD BEEN CLEARED. HOWEVER, HE INTIMATED THAT SINCE
FILM HAD ALSO AROUSED CONTROVERSY IN US AND UK, WE MIGHT HAVE
BEEN LAX IN NOT AT LEAST INFORMING UNIVERSITY IT HAD NOT BEEN
SUBMITTED TO CENSORS. WE APOLOGIZED FOR DIFFICULTIES INAD-
VERTENTLY CAUSED BUT SAID WE WERE AS SURPRISED AS HE THAT THE
SCREENING CAUSED SUCH A REACTION, PARTICULARLY SINCE BOOK
HAS BEEN ON SALE IN SA FOR SOME TIME. HE DID NOT ASK OUR
ADVICE ON PAYMENT OF FINE AND NONE WAS OFFERED. HE IS STILL
UNSURE WHETHER TO PAY ADMISSION OF GUILT AND END MATTER
QUIETLY OR CONTEST ISSUE IN COURT.
FARBER

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 14 jun 1978
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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780662/aaaacbbe.tel
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TAGS: SCUL, SOPN, SF
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